



TOGETHER: LIFE IN THE FAMILY

COMMUNITY GROUP LEADER GUIDE

This study guide is meant to help you learn and apply the truths of Scripture to your life right now, both individually and with your community group. To get the most from these guides, work through it on your own before gathering with your community group. If you aren't in a community group, consider attending the next Starting Point at Mercy Church, where you can take the next steps to connect with a community group in your area. RSVP at mercycharlotte.com/connect.

PART II: FRIENDING

INTRODUCTION

LEADER NOTES: *Welcome your members to the group. Use the discussion questions to help your group members observe, interpret, and apply the Scriptures to life.*

THE BIG IDEA: *Biblical friendships are essential to our growth as disciples of Christ.*

As we continue to learn about the importance of the family of Christ, we are going to take a look at King David's life and the influence of great friendship in the midst of hard and difficult times. In 1 Samuel 18 & 23, we see the deeply rooted friendship between David and Jonathan. Jonathan sacrificed it all, and committed his life to David. His commitment was carried all the way through, even when things got difficult. Jonathan was always with David to support him... when adversity struck, when death seemed certain and even when the odds were stacked against him. Jonathan stood with David and continued to walk with him in humility and truth even to the point of his own death.

We all need this kind of friendship. God designed us to be part of a community where everyone puts the other before himself or herself. Just as Jonathan loved and served David even in his most difficult times, Christ calls us to the same type of commitment within His body, the church.



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In Philippians 2:3-8, Paul shows us the design for our friendships is patterned after the life of Jesus.

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross.”

What an amazing picture of our Savior and his commitment to us at the sacrifice of his own life!

The ability to be a good friend comes from knowing God’s friendship towards us in King Jesus. He is the king/friend we are searching for! He came to us, even died for us, so that we might be reconciled to God. What a friend we have in Christ! In Christ we never have to search for the approval from people, you no longer have to leverage them to have your needs satisfied. Our need for true friendship is found first in Jesus.

STUDY AND DISCUSSION

In the message we received a picture of the power of friendship. These opening questions are designed to help your community group discussion get going.

LEADER NOTES: *These questions are here to help your group get their minds re-engaged with the passage and teaching points from the weekend message. Think of this as “priming the pump” for a more interactive discussion in your time together.*

1. Think back to some of your closest friends. What made/makes them such good friends to you?
2. What are some common experiences people need to share in order to move from acquaintance to good friends?



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INVESTIGATING SCRIPTURE:

The following questions are designed to help you gain understanding of what the Bible teaches.

LEADER NOTES: *The following questions will help you work through the passage(s). Have someone read the passage(s) aloud, dividing among two or three people if needed.*

The reading of the word, as a group, is an act of worship that helps the group focus on the importance of Scripture. Make a point to emphasize this as an important part of worship together. After the scripture is read, pray to continue to set the tone of worship. Praise God for the gospel and the finished work of Christ, and the transformation he gives through Christ.

Read 1 Samuel 23:15-18

1. What makes Jonathan such a good friend?
2. How is the type of friendship we see in the passage different from what most people experience in friendship today?
3. What are some barriers that keep most of us from experiencing the God-centered friendship we see between David and Jonathan?

Read Philippians 2:3-8

4. What does Philippians 2:3-8 say about the character of Christ as a friend?
5. How does the passage shed light on where the power of friendship comes from?
6. What is the next step for you toward true gospel-powered friendship with some in your life?



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TAKEAWAYS

These questions are intention to help you apply the truths about biblical family to your own walk with the Lord.

1. How did this discussion influence my view of friendships?
2. What is holding me back from these kinds of friendships?

PRAYER

Prayer is an essential component of your life as a follower of Christ, and an integral part of any healthy church body. Divide up into groups of 2-3 people and use the following points to guide you through a time of prayer together.

LEADER NOTES: *The following is designed simply as an outline for you to use in your group prayer time. Feel free to make this your own and adjust it to fit your group.*

- You would seek and maintain healthy relationships within our church family.
- Mercy Church will grow on the strength of Christ-centered friendships.
- Our friendship will make room for others to come too.